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AUTHOR Jones, Robin; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a larger project comparing civic capacity and urban education in 11 American cities. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section attempts to explain why civic capacity and public education in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Boston (Massachusetts), and St. Louis (Missouri), evolved from different paths, although they share a number of other features. The second section provides a brief statistical introduction to each city and its school system. This is followed by case studies that highlight the development of civic capacity and its relationship to public education. In the final section the study considers common themes around the establishment of civic capacity and its activation on behalf of public education. (EH)

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CIVIC CAPACITY AND URBAN EDUCATION
IN
PITTSBURGH, BOSTON, AND ST. LOUIS

Robin Jones, University of Pittsburgh
John Portz, Northeastern University
Lana Stein, University of Missouri at St. Louis

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Introduction

American public education, particularly urban education, has come under increasing criticism in recent years. Charges of poor student performance and low academic achievement are commonplace. The reforms of the 1980s, such as increased graduation requirements, have been replaced by more fundamental calls for "restructuring." Charter schools, school choice, and privatization are reforms that currently receive public attention. Common to all is a recognition that educational reform must go beyond the existing classroom and bring more actors, such as parents and new education providers, into the process.

The "Civic Capacity and Urban Education" project starts from a similar premise that urban education is more than what takes place within the walls of a classroom.¹ The strong correlation between social background and student performance highlights the point that formal schooling alone does not determine a student's educational success. Rather, education is more appropriately seen as a process of human capital formation in which families, neighborhoods, the work place, and other parts of the community contribute to achievement and learning.

In large urban centers, this perspective on education poses a particularly difficult challenge. The high levels of poverty, family stress, and economic dislocation that characterize many large cities diminish the development of community resources and support for public education. Students in urban school systems often face resource deficits in the broader community environment as well as the classroom.

Meeting this challenge calls for the development and activation of civic capacity on behalf of public education. By civic capacity we mean the establishment of cross sector alliances among representatives from the schools, city hall, nonprofit organizations, parent groups, and businesses (Stone 1989a). These alliances bring together stakeholders in the community on behalf of a shared problem-solving agenda. The resources brought to the table by each party are critical for collectively addressing problems that face the city.

To have an impact on the world of urban education, civic capacity must not only be created, but it must be activated on behalf of the public schools. Support for public education as a community interest does not arise naturally. Civic stakeholders typically look to their own interests first, therefore, a broader community conception of interests must be developed and nurtured. Establishing public education as a community interest, and

¹ This paper is part of a larger project comparing civic capacity and urban education in 11 American cities. Funding is provided by the National Science Foundation (#S134.331).

activating civic capacity in support of that interest, are critical challenges facing a city's leadership.

In this paper we analyze the establishment of civic capacity and its activation on behalf of public education in Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis. These three cities share a number of characteristics. All three have a history of machine-like politics. In Pittsburgh, the Democratic party, under the leadership of David Lawrence, took the reins of city government in the early 1930s and has not lost an election since. In Boston, James Curley and Kevin White represented two different variations on a common theme of strong-mayor control of city hall. In St. Louis, machine-style politics has existed for over 100 years, unabated with ward-based factions dominating city politics.

The three cities share a number of other features. All three have experienced significant economic changes, including the demise of many manufacturing jobs. In demographics, there has been a significant post-1950 population decline in all three cities, and communities of color constitute a growing proportion of the population in each city.

While the three cities have many common characteristics, they differ significantly in the degree to which they have activated civic capacity on behalf of public education. Pittsburgh, on one end of the spectrum, has a strong record of civic involvement and support for education. The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, in particular, has played a critical role in fostering one of the most acclaimed urban education systems in the country. Boston occupies a middle position. While the city's civic capacity is well-developed, public education has not always been seen as a major concern of civic elites. St. Louis is the least developed of the three cities in terms of civic support for public education. St. Louis is characterized more by temporary alliances around particular issues than by broad and sustained support for education reform.

The goal of this paper is to explain why civic capacity and public education in Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis evolved down different paths. The next section provides a brief statistical introduction to each city and its school system. This is followed by case studies that highlight the development of civic capacity and its relationship to public education. In the final section we consider common themes around the establishment of civic capacity and its activation on behalf of public education.

An Introduction to Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis

As noted earlier, all three cities have experienced a decline in population and increase in the percentage of residents from communities of color.

Table 1
City Population

	Pittsburgh		Boston		St. Louis	
	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990
Total Population	520,117	368,879	641,071	574,283	622,236	396,685
% White	79.3	71.6	81.8	59.0	58.7	50.2
% Black	20.2	25.6	16.3	23.8	40.9	47.3
% Asian	.3	1.6	1.3	5.2	.2	.9
% Hispanic	-	.9	.4	10.8	-	.8
City Pop. as % of Metro Area	21.7	18.0	26.3	16.2	23.3	20.0

In terms of city government, St. Louis is the least reformed of the three. Pittsburgh and Boston have strong-mayor systems, while the mayor in St. Louis shares budget authority with the comptroller and president of the board of alderman. City councils in all three involve district representation (and Boston includes some at-large councilors), although Pittsburgh and Boston have had periods of exclusively at-large representation in the past.

Table 2
City Government

	Pittsburgh	Boston	St. Louis
Mayor	Strong Mayor 4-Year Term	Strong Mayor 4-Year Term	Weak Mayor 4-Year Term
City Council (Board of Alderman)	9 Members: By District ² 4-Year Term	13 Members: 9 By District 4 At-Large 2-Yr. Term	28 Members: By District 4-Year Term
Elections	Partisan	Nonpartisan	Partisan

² From 1911 until 1989 the Pittsburgh City Council operated under an at-large representation system.

The school populations in all three cities follow a common trend: African-American, Asian, and Hispanic students represent a larger proportion of public school students than is true for that racial and ethnic group in the total city. In St. Louis, for example, 81% of public school students are from communities of color, while in the entire city 50% of residents are from similar groups.

Table 3
School Enrollment and Race

	Pittsburgh		Boston		St. Louis	
	1989	1993	1989	1993	1989	1993
Total Public Enrollment	39,308	40,167	55,820	59,146	44,065	41,213
% White	47.0	44.9	22.8	19.9	22.5	19.3
% Black	52.1	53.2	47.9	47.9	77.5	78.8
% Asian			8.8	9.2	--	1.4
% Hispanic	1.6	1.9	20.0	22.7	--	.5

In all three cities, a significant proportion of students attend either private schools or public schools in the suburbs. While only about 10% of students in the United States attend private schools, in the three cities private school attendance ranges from 21% to 26%. In St. Louis, with its extensive inter-district busing program, many city students also attend public schools in the suburbs.

Table 4
Private School and Suburban Public School Enrollment, 1993

	Pittsburgh	Boston	St. Louis
Number of Students in District Attending Private Schools (% of All Students)	14,062 (26%)	17,091 (22%)	14,389 (21%)
Number of Students in District Attending Suburban Public Schools (% of All Students)	Not Available	3,012 ¹ (4%)	13,493 (19%)

¹ This is the enrollment for the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities program. This is a state-funded program begun in 1965 to provide Boston youth with educational opportunities in suburban communities.

The cities vary in their school leadership experiences and structures. Boston has had the highest turnover in the superintendent's office, while Pittsburgh has experienced the least. Also, Boston's school board was recently changed to a mayoral-appointed body, while both Pittsburgh and St. Louis have continued with elected school boards.

Table 5
School Leadership

	Pittsburgh	Boston	St. Louis
No. of Supts. Since 1980	2	5	3
Current Superintendent and Race	Louise Brennan White	Thomas Payzant White (hired 8-95)	David Mahan White
No. of School Board Members	9	7 ⁴	12
School Board Selection Method	Elected by District	Appointed by Mayor	Elected At-Large
Fiscal Status of School Board	Independent	Dependent	Independent

Pittsburgh

Two Strands of School Reform. Pittsburgh public schools have managed to change in ways which, according to Hill et al. (1989), exemplify the "double helix of school reform." (11)

Like the double helix that combines and recombines genetic material to renew life, a citywide school improvement strategy must combine two complementary strands. The outside strand attracts and mobilizes political support and other resources from outside the traditional school bureaucracy, from taxpayers, businesses, and the larger community. The inside strand focuses on the content of schooling--curricula, academic standards, incentives and work rules for teachers, and a philosophy of school management. (11)

Pittsburgh, according to Hill et al., is one of the few cities which has "inside and outside strands comparably complete and fully articulated." (11) The development of Pittsburgh's "outside strand" results from a high level of civic capacity that has been activated in the education arena, while development of the "inside strand" results from leadership within the

⁴ Prior to 1992, Boston had a 13-member elected school board.

educational system. The story of educational policy making over the past 15 years shows the symbiotic relationship between these two strands--civic attention providing the superintendent(s) with the symbolic and material resources necessary to undertake fundamental change and the superintendent(s), in turn, conceptualizing, legitimating and implementing far-reaching institutional reform.

The result is that public education, while a highly salient issue, produces a very low level of community conflict. Whether through the relationships the school district forms with non-school stakeholders (business, racial groups, etc.) or the negotiations school leadership undertakes with school actors (unions, parents, etc.), most conflicts are managed in non-conflict arenas. Most often education issues are framed in technical educational terms; they do not become redefined as issues of race, taxes, power, jobs, etc. Thus, potential community conflicts are managed outside of the board. Hill et al. (1989) point out the dangers of a board which is the lightning rod of broader community conflicts:

A school board whose proceedings are the conflict resolution mechanism for a divided community will inevitably split. In such communities, concerted improvement efforts may be possible only after basic community conflicts are resolved. (28)

Pittsburgh's articulation of its two strands began 15 years ago in response to crisis. Pittsburgh Public Schools were in chaos in the 1970s as whites left the system and the courts demanded a desegregation plan. The board, reflecting the community's cleavages, could agree on little. Superintendents came and went. Facing similar circumstances, civic leadership in many cities abandoned the public schools. In Pittsburgh, however, civic leadership entered the fracas. That they did, and the manner in which they did, reflected a history of public problem solving or political culture which evolved throughout most of the 20th Century and which relates to the simultaneous demise of the political machine and the growth of civic organizations.

The Demise of the Political Machine and the Growth of Civic Organizations. Pittsburgh politics was controlled by the Republican Magee/Flinn machine during the last two decades of the 19th Century. Early in the 20th Century reform-oriented Republicans were able to implement several structural changes in the city's political system, including the establishment of a strong mayor with no term limits and the creation of a 9-member at-large City Council. While the Republican machine regained control, these reforms and the rise of a new corporate economic elite, profoundly changed how it functioned. The new business interests, headed by the Mellon family, determined who would be chosen for mayor but their control did not extend to the ward level. To guarantee that the elected leadership did not establish a grassroots base, Mellon would not support a mayor for

more than a single term. In 1929, a mayor who had established independent relationships with ward chairs, defied Mellon and ran for a second term.

Having lost direct control of the public sector, Mellon and his fellow business leadership, focused on the establishment of voluntary civic organizations as an extra-governmental public policy vehicle. Thus, as early as the late 1930s a parallel machine/civic organization policy-making system was developing in Pittsburgh. The ward based electoral machine existed separate from the public policy interest of the business elite. "Private civic nonprofit corporations provided [the business elites] with an organizational base beyond the control of the voting public" (Stevens 1987, 24).

In 1933, riding the New Deal wave, Pittsburgh Democrats won their first mayoralty race in decades. With David L. Lawrence in the background as chair of the state party, the Pittsburgh Democratic machine was built upon New Deal patronage. Every Pittsburgh mayor since 1933 has been a Democrat, but while party leader Lawrence built a Democratic machine, it was Mayor Lawrence who, ironically, laid the foundation for its demise. Fearing a Democratic defeat in Pittsburgh in 1945, David Lawrence agreed to run himself. To broaden his base of support, Lawrence adopted the Republican downtown redevelopment agenda for Pittsburgh, articulated by Mellon's newest civic non-profit, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) (Weber 1990, 231). Lawrence's victory and the subsequent joining of his public sector control with Mellon's private sector leadership resulted in the Renaissance I partnership which rebuilt the blighted Point, cleaned the air in the county, and ended the near annual flooding of the central business district.

What is significant here are the structural changes which resulted from the implementation of the development agenda. The ACCD hired its own professional planning staff. In turn, Lawrence centralized the development function within the city bureaucracy by creating one of the nation's first urban redevelopment authorities, naming himself as its chair. He also placed many ACCD supporters in key administrative posts (Weber 1990, 231). Ferman (forthcoming) describes what resulted as a "... corporatist decisionmaking structure that insulated development policy from electoral politics." While the private and quasi-private development organizations were able to define economic development in technical terms, the machine's need to reward electoral support was fulfilled through non-development related public services. This separation of the governing and electoral roles was made even easier in Pittsburgh since the early 20th Century reforms established an at-large Council.⁵

⁵ In 1989 City Council was changed from at-large to district elections to achieve racial balance.

This pattern of decision-making has dominated public problem solving in Pittsburgh in the post WWII era. This is true even in issue areas usually defined as outside the purview of business elite, for example, housing and neighborhood development. During the late 1950s the Lawrence/ACCD partnership used federal urban renewal funding to clear an African-American community bordering the CBD. As in most cities, the federally-funded bulldozer prompted the creation of community-based opposition groups. Unlike most cities, however, Pittsburgh's public/private partnership attempted to integrate their demands into its agenda. It created a new non-profit agency, ACTION-Housing, Inc., to construct affordable housing as replacement housing for displaced urban renewal victims. While the success of this initiative did not compare with that experienced in the rebuilding of the central business district, the pattern of community decision making remained the same--a new civic organization was created, insulated from the conflict-ridden electoral arena.

This pattern was repeated time and again over the next three decades. The ACCD, either directly or through a closely aligned research group, the Pennsylvania Economy League, responded to demands by expanding its agenda and creating new institutions. Thus, resources--material and symbolic--were made available for experimentation. In the process, the issue was framed in technical terms, producing less conflict and allowing for the inclusion of new groups. This pattern has been followed in the areas of minority business development, high technology development, community-based development and, as we shall see below, public education.

Civic Capacity and Public Education. In 1968 the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission demanded that the Pittsburgh Public Schools submit a desegregation plan. Over the next decade the Board could not agree on a plan and superintendents were fired or resigned; racial and neighborhood-based groups organized around the issue; even the mayor became a vocal participant in chaotic school board hearings. Thus, during the 1970s the public school arena in Pittsburgh looked much like that in many large cities today.

But, unlike most cities, the civic leadership decided that the public schools were an important community resource. The ACCD offered its assistance in defusing the issue. The business elite's involvement, however, was not in the form of an ultimatum or blueprint that reflected their particular views of what was wrong with the school system. Rather they established a broadly representative planning forum to develop consensus, indicating that they saw public education as an important community-wide issue. The willingness of the ACCD to support a community-wide planning forum indicated their confidence that, if well structured, a broadly-based forum could reduce conflict. In addition to organizing the planning forum, ACCD staff helped formulate an acceptable desegregation plan.

While community conflict reduction was essential in meeting the immediate crisis, of even greater long-term significance was the ACCD's investment in the institutional development of the school system itself. The ACCD established the Allegheny Conference Education Fund (ACEF)⁹ that provided material and informational resources to the Pittsburgh Public Schools; it provided the initial funding for two new positions in the system--Director of Public Relations and Director of Development; it funded a national search for a new superintendent and, over the next 12 years, supported the reform agenda of the successful candidate, Dr. Richard Wallace. As well, the support of the ACCD allowed the Pittsburgh Public Schools access to a wide variety of other resource-rich institutions--universities, foundations, health care providers--resulting in a myriad of programmatic partnerships.

In addition to these concrete contributions to public education, the ACCD became, as one corporate executive said, "a state of mind." The story is told that in the midst of a teacher contract negotiation session that was being continuously disrupted by overzealous reporters, the President of the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) moved the negotiators into the offices of the ACCD. The director of the ACCD returned from lunch surprised to find his offices occupied. The symbolic nature of the ACCD's conflict resolution role is made even more evident by virtue of the fact that the PFT President and the ACCD Executive Director had never met.

School System Leadership. While civic leadership established an environment in which peaceful school change could take place, it was the strong, durable leadership of two superintendents that made it happen. Richard Wallace provided a near-textbook example of institutional leadership. He first claimed a mandate for change. Immediately upon arriving in Pittsburgh, Wallace called upon the university research center to conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment in education. The results were quickly translated into a detailed action plan which he took to the board. Once the board approved it, he sought corporate and foundation funding to cover the initial costs of experimentation and implementation. Thus, Wallace quickly displayed his intention to take charge of the school system while at the same time indicating his willingness to continue the dialogue with civic leaders. Using the distinction between "place based" and "career" bound superintendents, Wallace was certainly career bound, but he fit comfortably in the corporate leadership style of Pittsburgh (House 1974).

Wallace then turned inward, reforming the public education system. The reforms that Wallace implemented were comprehensive

⁹ ACEF was viewed as so successful that in 1983 the Ford Foundation gave the ACCD a grant to spread the model to other cities across the country. The Public Education Fund (PEF) was housed at the ACCD until 1988, at which time it changed from being a funder to being a technical assistance provider and moved to Washington, D.C.

and far reaching, gaining Pittsburgh a reputation as one of the most innovative urban school systems in the country. In the early 1980s he developed a student testing program (MAP) which helped teachers monitor progress in such a way that timely corrections could be made. The tests had to be "curriculum based," as opposed to "standardized," and administered frequently. This immediate feedback and corrective action led to improvements in basic skills performance among all students, including African-American students. One author stated that MAP "is arguably the most comprehensive internal assessment program in any U.S. school district" (Kerchner 1993, 47).

Wallace also addressed the issue of staff performance. Wallace argued to the board that "firing teachers was the easy way out. [T]he more difficult issue was to make marginal teachers good, good teachers better, and better teachers excellent." During the 1980s teacher training centers were established and all teachers--secondary (PRISM III), elementary (PRISM IV) and middle (PRISM V)--were pulled out of their regular classrooms for 6 to 8 weeks of intensive training. In exchange for the union's support for the teacher training programs, Wallace agreed to substantial pay increases. As a result, the powerful Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) has not struck since the late 1970s and the longtime PFT President, Al Fondy, is frequently involved in school policy making. Firestone (1994, 55) distinguishes between financial and intrinsic incentives for teachers, arguing that while the former motivates teachers to stay in the job, the latter motivates them to perform. The high financial rewards for teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools may keep some teachers, who have lost their commitment to the task of educating the city's youth, in the system. But, the professionalization of the teaching staff has sought to make them better teachers.

Wallace also implemented reforms aimed at maintaining enrollment and attracting new students. He used the magnet concept to desegregate schools as well as to attract enrollment. He also emphasized gifted programs. By 1985 not only had the enrollment decline been stopped, but nearly 1000 students per year were entering the system from parochial and private schools. Enrollment figures have remained fairly stable since then.

What is significant here, however, is not the technical proficiency of the changes so much as how they contributed to the discourse. Actors within the school system were included in the development of the reforms (e.g. the involvement of the union leadership, the instructional councils, etc.). At the same time, many of the reforms aimed at fundamentally changing the way school personnel viewed their role. The extensive staff development and professionalization programs sought to focus the attention of all principals and teachers on instructional improvement. Thus the issue continued to be framed as quality education and not compensation, classroom or school-level control, etc.

⁷ Interview of Dr. Richard Wallace 9/16/94.

Programs were developed, justified, and ultimately judged by referencing their contribution to the instructional process. A data-based management system institutionalized this focus. The central administration used the data to do strategic planning and to monitor implementation of the reform. It also promoted a culture of data-based decision making by others in the system--the board, principals, and teachers. Recommendations for change bubbled-up from within the system. Linkages between the Pittsburgh Public Schools and non-school actors were also enhanced by the reliance on data-based management. Resource-rich institutions readily partnered within the system, at the level of the individual classroom, the school, and the district as a whole. Even advocacy groups and coalitions engaged in informed debate about how best to provide quality education, often using the district's own published statistics to make their case.

Wallace used the stability created by the early intervention of civic elites to create systemic change. But he also used the change to create a new stability. His successor, Louise Brennen, was able to take advantage of this to launch her own far-reaching reforms in 1992. She, too, built a new community consensus, using the state-mandated strategic planning process both to show how Pittsburgh was implementing the state's new outcomes-based curriculum, as well as to move the system towards site-based management. All of the important actors, inside as well as outside the school system, participated in this two-year process and the Board readily accepted the plan. As it is implemented, site-based management will bring new actors--community organizations, unorganized parents, etc.--into the arena and create new issues for old actors, such as the challenge to teacher autonomy in the classroom and the inequality of community support across the system. The challenge to Brennen's leadership is to manage these new conflicts through continued public discourse on how best to educate children.

Conclusion. The pattern of public decision making which has evolved in Pittsburgh throughout most of the 20th Century can be seen in the public education arena. In response to community conflict, civic leadership was activated and framed the issue--both through the establishment of a planning forum and by direct policy formulation. While in many cases the implementation of recommendations made by civic leaders took place through quasi-governmental authorities or new non-profit organizations, in the case of public education the public school system itself became the implementing agency. Pittsburgh's civic leadership has shown that it does not want (or perhaps is not capable of) direct involvement in the implementation of broad policy. Rather, civic leaders provide material and symbolic resources necessary for experimentation. This experimentation can be surprisingly radical (as in the case of ACTION-Housing's early neighborhood organizing or the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development's support of community economic development in public housing communities) as long as it is well managed.

In the case of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Richard Wallace provided this management through strong leadership. The result is that the school system has changed in ways that controlled conflict--both inside and outside the system. Following the pattern established during Renaissance I of separating governing from electoral arenas, school board elections are personality based rather than issue based. Once seated, the board reflects divisions within the community. While the board and the superintendent set policy, conflicts that arise on the board remain within the board and are not broadened to the whole community. Further indication of this is that school politics remains separate from city politics. Mayors and councilpersons seldom voice opinions on school policy and board elections are conducted quite separate from council elections, even though both are now district based. This is true even though the past three board presidents have gone on to higher political offices.

As Firestone said about educational reform, "Paradoxically, change requires a great deal of stability" (1989, 160). In Pittsburgh, the stability has been created by an ongoing process of issue definition through structured, community-wide dialogue. The change has been provided by strong school system leadership.

Boston

Boston occupies a middle position on our scale of civic capacity and educational reform. The post-war legacy of strong mayors and elite institutions, particularly the Coordinating Committee, set the stage for several cross-sector coalitions that focus on public education. Although these coalitions have helped foster numerous reform initiatives, frustrations and educational deficiencies continue. Activating civic capacity on behalf of education has faced a number of obstacles, including a history of weak leadership, general public cynicism, and racial cleavages.

Civic Capacity in Boston. In the last forty years, the most dominant coalition of economic interests has been the Coordinating Committee, often known as the Vault. Formed in 1959, the Vault brought together approximately thirty business leaders to discuss and coordinate action designed to further the economic condition of the city. The Vault was a major sponsor of downtown development activities as well as fiscal stability policies in the city.

The Vault did not enter the education arena until 1982 when it helped form the Boston Compact, a collaboration among businesses, higher education, labor, city government, and the public schools. The goal of the Compact, which continues today, is to support the school system in improving educational performance, while encouraging businesses and colleges to provide employment and post-secondary educational opportunities for public school graduates. The Compact has been re-negotiated every five years, with Compact III signed in January 1994.

Signatories to the Compact, particularly business partners, have played a significant role in driving educational reform. Reauthorization of the Compact in the late 1980s, for example, was delayed until the public schools agreed to begin site-based management, and the 1994 version of the Compact was again delayed pending satisfactory progress on a number of issues, including the extension of site-based management and creation of "pilot" schools (within-district charter schools). Other programs and services under the auspices of the Compact, which primarily relies upon the Private Industry Council to provide staff support, include school-business partnerships, professional development programs for educators, and summer job opportunities for students. At present, the parties to the Compact have established several committees to oversee implementation and create evaluation standards to measure progress in meeting the goals of the Compact.

Two other coalitions deserve mention, although they play a more focused role. The Boston Plan For Excellence, with representatives from higher education, businesses, law offices, banks, and foundations, provides financial support for the professional development of teachers and specific curriculum initiatives, as well as college scholarships for qualifying high school graduates. Formed in 1984, the Plan for Excellence has over \$21 million in assets.

The Citywide Education Coalition, formed in 1973, provides a voice for citizens concerned about public education in Boston. The Coalition has a very broad membership from the education community, local businesses, foundations, banks, higher education, and other community-based organizations. The Coalition sponsors public forums and disseminates newsletters providing current information on the school system.

Obstacles to Activating Civic Capacity. These coalitions, particularly the Boston Compact, have played an important role in educational reform, yet the scope and depth of this role does not match that played by the Allegheny Conference in Pittsburgh. Activation of Boston's civic capacity on behalf of public education faces important hurdles, including a legacy of desegregation and racial cleavages, unstable educational leadership, and general public cynicism.

Unlike the Allegheny Conference's role in fostering a community-based response to racial segregation, the Boston Compact was created eight years after the school system was placed under a federal court desegregation order. The 1974 federal court order began a 15-year period of extensive court involvement in the operations of the public schools. From mandatory busing to teacher assignment to magnet schools, federal judge W. Arthur Garrity played the dominant role in shaping the Boston Public Schools.

The federal court order dramatized the failure of existing community leaders to resolve the problems of segregation. The Boston School Committee, as well as political and business

leaders, were unable to address deep-rooted inequities in the school system. The courts stepped-in and took control of the educational agenda. While the Boston Compact and other civic institutions of the city were concerned with educational improvement, they did not control the substance or direction of educational change; the courts played that role.

In addition to confronting a legacy of court control of the schools, civic capacity on behalf of public education has also suffered from unstable and fragmented leadership. The Boston School Committee, in particular, has been the target of frequent criticism for poor leadership and governance. From 1982 to 1992 the committee consisted of 13 elected members and was most often noted for political infighting and fiscal irresponsibility. A Boston Globe editorial, for example, described the board as "a disaster. Infighting, grandstanding, aspirations for higher political office, and incompetence have become mainstays of the 13-member committee. The system is floundering" (Boston Globe 1990, p. 26). Similarly, several blue-ribbon commissions in the late 1980s and early 1990s recommended major changes. This ongoing criticism finally ended in 1992 when the elected committee was replaced by a 7-member body appointed by the mayor. The appointed committee has met with less criticism, but its collective and appointed nature diminishes its potential for strong leadership.

The school superintendent is the most likely candidate for educational leadership, but unlike Pittsburgh, Boston has experienced instability in this office. Turnover in the office and disagreements with the mayor and school committee have diminished the superintendent's power base. Since 1973, the Boston Public Schools have had six different permanent superintendents, and four periods during which an acting superintendent was in charge (Boston Municipal Research Bureau 1992). Most recently, Laval Wilson, the first black superintendent, served from 1985 until early 1990 when he was fired by the school committee in a racially-divided vote. Lois Harrison-Jones was hired by the elected committee after a long (15 months) and politically-charged search. Within six months, however, she faced the difficult task of developing a relationship with a newly-appointed school committee that was not involved in her appointment. Harrison-Jones continued as superintendent for four years before she lost favor with the school committee and new mayor and left office in July 1995.

In August 1995, Thomas Payzant, assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Education and former superintendent in San Diego and Oklahoma City, was offered the position of superintendent. Payzant enters the superintendent's office with considerable experience as well as the support of the mayor and school committee. Expectations are high for his tenure in Boston.

A potential for school leadership also exists in the mayor's office. Under the city's strong-mayor system, the school

department is fiscally dependent upon the city for its overall budget level, and the mayor plays the major role in determining the city's budget. Boston's mayors, however, have typically held the school system at arm's length. Mayor Flynn (1984-93) once commented to a business group that "public education is an area that can swallow up the most promising career and politicians are counseled at every step to 'stay away from the schools'" (Flynn 1993, p. 19). Flynn, however, did take a very active role in changing the school committee structure from elected to appointed, but his relationship with the schools was episodic. Mayor Menino (1993-present) has assumed responsibility for improving public education and is facing a major test as he tries to develop a strong working relationship with the new superintendent.

Another important obstacle to activating civic capacity on behalf of education is public cynicism. In our interviews with community elites, almost one-half of respondents (21 or 48) identified public cynicism as an important "obstacle" facing the schools. A former school administrator emphasized the "mean spirit" and lack of trust toward the schools, while two current administrators commented on the "cynicism about BPS" and the fact that "the general public has little faith in the school system." A 1990 public opinion poll demonstrated this point: 77 percent of city residents rated the quality of the school system as below average or poor (Ribadeneira 1990a).

Along with concerns over the quality of the public schools, this cynicism is rooted in the split between the city's population and users of the school system. Many Bostonians do not consider the public schools 'their own.' In fact, fewer than 20 percent of households in the city have children in the public schools (Clay 1991). Many households do not include school-age children, and a significant number of families with children do not use the Boston Public Schools. One quarter of school-age students in Boston attend either private schools or public schools outside the city. For these families and households, the Boston Public Schools have little direct relevance to their lives. Indeed, there is a pattern of disownership of the public schools.

Another related obstacle involves racial divisions. Although the federal court concluded its oversight in the late 1980s, a legacy of racial tensions and divisions continues and has a significant impact on the activation of civic support for the public schools. Racial divisions, for example, contribute to the distance noted earlier between the city's school-users and other households. For example, in the Boston Public Schools 81 percent of students are of African-American, Asian, or Hispanic heritage, yet persons of color account for only 41 percent of the city's overall population. In addition, children of color are more likely to be in the public schools: 90 percent of African-American, Asian, and Hispanic elementary and high school students in Boston attend public schools, whereas for white school age children the comparable measure is approximately 50 percent.

This racial cleavage has important political implications. While public school students come predominately from communities of color, the largest voting blocs in the city are primarily white areas. Boston is becoming a city split between adult white neighborhoods, politically active but with limited involvement in the public schools, and neighborhoods of color, with children in the schools but limited political standing. Building a constituency within this environment is indeed a challenge. As one community activist commented, "It's going to take a lot of going out and convincing people that the future of the city is grounded in the future of the schools" (Sege 1991, p. 26).

Conclusion. Although these challenges are formidable, the current environment is ripe for positive change. The mayor has taken a visible stand in favor of public education, a new superintendent will be on-board this fall, and the system is beginning a series of significant reforms that have support from the mayor, business community, teachers union, and parent groups. For the first time in recent years, the major educational actors in Boston are on a common path. Success is far from certain, but the pieces are present to make significant strides in improving public education.

St. Louis

St. Louis has a public school system plagued by poor performance and institutional malaise. Unlike either Pittsburgh or Boston, a strong partnership has not been forged between the business community and the mayor and/or the school system. Without this type of active partnership, the federal court and existing institutional relationships have provided whatever impetus to reform that does exist.

Civic Capacity in St. Louis. In 1953, Mayor Darst created Civic Progress--made up of the chiefs of major corporations headquartered in St. Louis--to assist with urban renewal. His successor expanded the group when he succeeded Darst. Large business, as well as newspapers and unions, were fierce advocates of the remaking of the city and principally its downtown. However, business and elected officials formed only a low cohesion regime. They worked together on an as-needed and project-specific basis, particularly after 1965. Civic Progress has no staff of its own, relying instead on a person from the public relations firm of Fleishman-Hillard as a spokesperson.

Involvement-by-project is most evident after 1970 and the demise of urban renewal. Civic Progress certainly remained involved in civic affairs but it was to help build a stadium or arena or secure a football team. Civic Progress has policy-based committees but the one dealing with the public schools is headed by someone perceived as not part of its main core. As we will see, actions taken by Civic Progress regarding the schools reflect the low cohesion of the regime.

Machine-Like Politics and Limited Interest in Public Education. The nature of St. Louis's regime is clearly a product of its political structure. Although the city never had a true political machine, it has always been a machine politics city, characterized by ward factionalism, patronage, and race. St. Louis is both city and county and its eight county offices are elected at-large and staffed by patronage to this day. The public schools long were involved in the patronage network with ward committeemen selecting non-teaching employees. Although the most blatant abuses ended in 1959, the tradition of political involvement in the schools remained. Many black staff members today have ties to the city's leading black politician. A number of observers look at the schools as a black bailiwick (student population is 80% black) and leave it alone as they do public housing. As Stone (1989a) noted in his study of Atlanta, an extensive network of political and business cooperation is unlikely to occur in a city dominated by ward-based politics.

Many elected officials in St. Louis--particularly those who are white--have shown little interest in the public schools for decades. Before the preponderant black student majority, Catholic officeholders and their constituency had little interest in the public schools, which they did not use. Approximately 21% of school age students in the city attend private schools, most of which are in the parochial system. Further, those using the parochial system sometimes joined with senior citizens to defeat school bond issues. St. Louis's current mayor, Freeman Bosley Jr., the first black to hold the position, is also the first public school graduate to do so in many years.

Bosley has shown interest in the public schools and has visited over thirty in two-and-one-half years. His office attempted to gain fiscal control of a possible National Science Foundation grant but was successfully thwarted by school administrators. His predecessor, Vincent Schoelmehl, also tried in some ways to influence the schools. In these attempts, neither worked in a coalition with business or other groups and the public schools remained vigilant against threats to their autonomy. The public schools are legally separate and fiscally autonomous entities with a separate board governing the system. The board has 12 members elected at-large in nonpartisan contests. Interestingly, a longtime ward leader, John Dwyer, warned city officials not to get involved in the schools in 1966. He said, you can't win. By and large, that attitude continues to govern most of the city's elected officials, many of whom are still Catholic.

Court-Ordered Desegregation. There has been one major change agent that has had a decisive impact on St. Louis's public schools. In 1971, Minnie Liddell filed a suit on behalf of her son, accusing the schools of inequality of resources and effort in black schools. Although the St. Louis economy is like many midwestern cities, it is more southern in history and character. It was a border state and a slave state and though it did not

formally join the Confederacy, Missouri's sympathies lay with the South.

In this century, Missouri segregated its school systems by law as it did public accommodations. St. Louis's schools desegregated quietly immediately after the Brown decision but residential patterns and district boundaries kept many neighborhood schools segregated.

In 1981, ten years after Minnie Liddell's suit was filed, the federal district court delivered its decision in the St. Louis desegregation case. The court ordered extensive in-city busing. It also ordered 14 suburban school districts to enter into the agreement as well as the state of Missouri. City children were to be bused to the suburbs and white suburban youngsters were to attend the city's new and growing magnet schools that were created by the court order. The court also involved itself in closing certain schools, having others rehabbed, and having new magnet facilities built.

Today, 13,000 black city children attend schools in suburban districts. About 1,100 suburbanites attend the city's magnets. Test scores show that magnet school attenders perform best, followed by those bused to the suburbs; last are students at regular city schools.

Education in St. Louis has evolved into two different two-tiered systems. The first is parochial versus public. Because of the large number of Catholics living in St. Louis, Catholic schools have always received widespread support within the city. The second is the magnet schools versus all others in the system. A number of magnets have won high praise and national recognition, particularly those which include pre-kindergarten programs. The non-magnets vary in quality but a number are mediocre at best.

St. Louis's massive desegregation has affected the probability of forming a multi-sector coalition for reform. First, it has dominated the agenda for over a decade, crowding out any discussion of substantive reform. Second, it has polarized the community. Finally, it has strengthened the rigidity of the system's bureaucracy.

St. Louis's public school administration is highly in-bred. At one point, 95% of the staff had attended the same local teachers' college. Many belong to the same sororities and fraternities and some share political ties. Normally, large bureaucracies tend to be rigid and will attempt to deflect outside interference in their activities. Operating under a desegregation order has reinforced this tendency among St. Louis's administrators. In attempts to begin site-based management, for example, central office bureaucrats tried to dilute any change in authority over curriculum, change that was proposed by a few aldermen and school board members and community representatives.

Limited Business Role in Public Education. A business person noted that he and his colleagues did not have the time or energy to deal with "that bureaucracy." Instead, their major foray into school matters involved the 1991 school board election in which a slate of white candidates who opposed integration practices had a chance to obtain a majority on the school board. Business elites opposed this group, pumped a great deal of money into the election, and were successful in defeating the white candidates. But, it was a limited project.

Following this 1991 election, Civic Progress did not turn its campaign energy to efforts to increase school performance. Two of its leaders involved themselves in small projects but Civic Progress itself did not enter into a sustained commitment. In St. Louis, you do not find the on-going and in-depth participation of the Allegheny Conference nor a compact like Boston's.

St. Louis has not achieved the civic capacity necessary to create broad-based coalitions for school reform. The city's ward factionalism militated against a high cohesion regime between business and government. The high percentage of Catholics in the population produced dual school systems early on which diluted interest in public education among the general citizenry and elected officials. As the school population began to change discernibly in St. Louis, the Catholic alternative was a very viable one for those who had used it before. In addition, the St. Louis public schools have been effected by their machine politics legacy. They also have become extremely insular and in-bred over the years. Desegregation reinforced these tendencies, making it difficult to have reform from either within or without.

Conclusion. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding Kansas City desegregation makes it clear that St. Louis's plan will end in the near future as well. At that time, the system may have to absorb the 13,000 students bused to the suburbs for which it does not have capacity, and it will lose millions in court-ordered state funds. Further, there will be a new superintendent within a year and many top staff are approaching retirement. These developments are such that change might be possible. However, definitive reform is not likely because of the lack of a multi-sector coalition providing the impetus. The mayor wants the return of neighborhood schools that could serve as multi-purpose centers--bulwarks against crime and instability. Business says it wants improvements. So do neighborhood leaders. But, fragmentation persists and there is little hope for civic capacity. A major thrust over time by Civic Progress, in conjunction with the mayor, could have an impact. However, such an effort is not characteristic of Civic Progress to date. Therefore, any prognosis for public education in St. Louis has to be guarded at best.

Comparing Cities: Civic Capacity and Public Education

Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis offer quite different examples of civic capacity and support for public education. In Pittsburgh, the development of cross-sector coalitions and the activation of that capacity on behalf of public education puts this community in the forefront of educational reform and achievement. Boston has considerable civic capacity, but for a variety of reasons it has been less successful in focusing on public education. And St. Louis, lacking a strong public-private coalition and with a history of fragmented interest in the schools, struggles to develop a broad-based network of support for public education.

In our analysis of these cities, three themes emerge that merit closer attention. First, the task of transforming elite business coalitions from an economic development focus to a public education focus is difficult and hard to sustain. Second, the role of leadership is critical in developing and activating civic capacity, but creating such leadership is also a very difficult process. And third, the courts, through desegregation rulings, can complicate a community's effort to create civic capacity and support public education. These three points are considered below.

Business Groups and Civic Capacity. Each city contains a relatively powerful business association that has supported, and continues to support, economic development efforts. The Allegheny Conference in Pittsburgh was the driving force behind Renaissance I and II involving extensive redevelopment of parts of the Pittsburgh area. The Vault in Boston was instrumental in downtown development, as well as maintaining the city's fiscal stability. Civic Progress in St. Louis supported the urban renewal process and continues to focus on downtown development.

The transition from support for economic development to support for public education is, however, a difficult one. The economic and educational worlds are quite different. While financial capital and land use are central to economic development, social development and classroom pedagogy are at the heart of public education. Clearly, the business community is more comfortable in the former than the latter. Corporate executives are well-versed in development pro formas, capital investment options, and construction strategies.

Translating capacity developed in the economic world into support for public education requires, at a minimum, two critical steps. First, the business community must recognize and accept public education as within its domain of interest. A connection must be made between the economic vitality of the business firm and what happens in the schools and the city overall. In essence, economic development must be redefined to incorporate human capital development. As one Boston business executive commented, the business community must come to see education as an

"investment" rather than "consumption" if it intends to support public education.

There are different ways to make this linkage. In Pittsburgh, the involvement of the ACCD has followed two paths. Initial involvement in the 1970s was part of a general movement away from physical redevelopment to social issues, including housing, minority business development, and education. Explicit ties were made between these and the long-term economic development of the city. In the case of public education, the goal was to defuse conflict generated by the desegregation crisis and also curb white flight from the central city to the suburbs. More recently, the business community's involvement has been couched in terms of workforce development. A new regional organization, the Allegheny Policy Council for Youth and Workforce Development, was formed in 1992 to build upon Renaissance I and II with a "human resource renaissance to bring vitality to the region" (Allegheny Policy Council 1994).

In Boston, the workforce development linkage always has been prominent. The Boston Compact, for example, was designed around the connection between knowledge learnt in school and skills required on the job. Under the Compact the schools are responsible for developing appropriate career skills, and the business community provides job opportunities. Various programs that support the school-to-career transition, such as ProTech, are highlighted as major public-private initiatives. In St. Louis, however, this type of linkage does not exist and business involvement is peripatetic and limited.

Second, the skills and resources of the business community must be utilized in a way that strengthens education. Here again, there are two worlds to bridge. Business skills tend to focus on financial and management matters, not the complexities of learning and educational administration. While there are certainly areas of overlap, such as basic financial operations and personnel management, many of the skills and resources of the business community are not well-attuned to the needs of public education.

Pittsburgh's approach to this challenge offers a positive example. Rather than become directly involved in the implementation of educational reform, the Allegheny Conference has played a facilitating role by providing a variety of material and symbolic resources. Educators and educational institutions retain responsibility for planning and implementation, but they do so with the structural support of the civic community. This particular marriage of civic support and educational skills has worked quite successfully. While not the only way to incorporate the business community into a support structure for public education, the Pittsburgh example does offer a useful model for others to consider.

Leadership. Integrating the business community into the civic structure of the city is one among many challenges for urban leadership. As Stone argues, the fundamental task of urban

leadership is "building, maintaining, and modifying a governing regime" (1989b, 154). This involves developing the power to frame issues and actions as community concerns, as well as the ability to bring together, and hold together, a coalition of actors capable of exercising governing responsibilities.

In the context of civic capacity and public education, the responsibilities for urban leadership appear on two quite different fronts (see Hill et al. 1989). First, leadership is needed outside the school system to bring together the constellation of groups and interests that create the key cross-sector alliances and institutions of the city. In particular, leadership is needed to foster a common conception and agenda around public education, as well as incorporate the educational community into the civic institutions of the city. Mayors are candidates for this role, but others, including business leaders or community organizations, might play this part.

Second, leadership is needed within the school system. The challenge here is quite different. Teachers, principals, and other educators within the system are part of a large institution that needs the guidance of an educational vision as well as the support of a skilled manager. The likely candidates for this role include the superintendent and school board. In addition, regardless of who plays the roles within and outside the school system, a productive connection between the two is also an important piece.

Pittsburgh offers our best example of how this challenge was met. Outside the school system, leadership was provided by a collective entity, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. As noted earlier, the facilitative role played by the Allegheny Conference was the key ingredient in bringing all parties to the table on behalf of public education. The Allegheny Conference had the resources and reputation in the community to assume this role. Within the school system, superintendent Richard Wallace provided leadership for twelve years, a near-record for contemporary big-city superintendents. Beyond simple continuity, Wallace took the reins of the system and used an initial education 'audit' of the schools to establish, and then implement, a comprehensive reform package.

Boston and St. Louis offer distinct counterexamples. In Boston, the failures of leadership proved particularly devastating to the system. Outside the schools, a legacy of court intervention (see below) and structural separation of the school department from city hall helped to create a leadership vacuum. In general, mayors, business executives, and other potential leaders were reluctant to take-on the schools. Within the Boston school system, turnover of superintendents and a highly politicized school board left another leadership void. Although current prospects are brighter, a legacy of turmoil and neglect in the area of governance characterizes the within-system experience with leadership.

In St. Louis, leadership on behalf of public education has been even weaker. Although the current mayor has taken an interest in the schools, business, government and the schools have a long history of weak ties. With little civic leadership, and limited leadership within the school system, the agenda has been dominated by busing and racial polarization.

Courts. The development and activation of civic capacity is subject to the influence of many individuals, organizations, and interests in the community. As noted above, business corporations, for example, play a central role. In two of our cities, Boston and Pittsburgh, federal courts also played a major role. The Boston Public Schools operated under a myriad of court orders between 1974 and the late 1980s, and the St. Louis schools have been subject to court desegregation orders since 1981.

The effect of court orders on a school system is quite complicated and deserves more attention than we are able to provide in this paper, but there is a general effect on the development of civic capacity that should be outlined. In particular, the courts appear to have a displacement effect with regards to the development of civic capacity. That is, when courts take control of the school system, the arena for educational policymaking and civic development shifts away from civic institutions in the community and to the federal courthouse. As this happens, the world of judicial precedents, procedures, and legal mandates replaces a more open environment in which community actors negotiate, build, and nurture civic associations.

In Boston, for example, Judge Garrity issued orders involving such practices as student and teacher assignment, building repairs, and school closures. In addition, he ordered the establishment of magnet schools and school partnerships with businesses and colleges. While many individual orders had positive results, the judicial process in general displaced the development of a community-based governance system. As one participant in the process noted, a number of community institutions, such as colleges and businesses, were "dragged into the arena by court order," and a "complex and shadowy" governance structure was created that lacked "comprehensive oversight" of the process (Wood 1982, 464, 457).

In St. Louis as well, the period of court-ordered desegregation has not been conducive to the development of civic capacity. As in Boston, the court has been involved in many school system decisions, and the desegregation orders have polarized sentiments regarding the schools. A group of citizens opposed to desegregation has maintained a vocal presence on the school board for much of the last ten years and has turned the board into an arena for racial battles.

To be certain, the courts play a critical role in protecting individual rights, but they also can negatively impact the development of civic capacity. In a process that emphasizes judicial procedures, individual complaints, and legal rights, and

typically lacks a comprehensive system of policy review and adaptation, the ability to craft broad social policy and engender civic development is limited (Rosenberg 1991; Horowitz 1977). Rather, interested parties do battle in the courts instead of engaging in the deliberate process of building civic capacity. As one study of six big-city school districts found, the community infrastructure for major school improvement efforts typically begins only after desegregation battles have been resolved in the courts (Hill et al. 1989).

From Urban Machines to Civic Capacity. The shared legacy of machine-like politics in our three cities--in which politics, patronage, and exchange permeate the community--has given way to a diverse set of contemporary governance experiences. This is particularly true in education. Pittsburgh offers a corporatist model in which civic organizations are largely insulated from politics and electoral cycles. Educational governance through the school system and civic organizations is separated from electoral politics that characterizes such arenas as school board elections.

Boston and St. Louis offer different examples of how civic capacity and governance can evolve. In Boston, considerable energy was expended to abolish the elected school committee in order to end its political influences on public education, but politics stills plays an important role in educational governance. A mayoral-appointed school committee, a new mayor, and a new superintendent will try to create a governance arrangement that incorporates other parts of the community while mediating political demands. In St. Louis, the agenda is still dominated by desegregation and on-going control by the federal district court. The school system's bureaucratic rigidity and resistance to significant outside intervention militate against coalition building as does the loose nature of business-government ties. Change could be possible when desegregation ends but the portents are not promising.

The challenge for all three communities is to create a system of stable governance and civic support for public education, while retaining responsiveness to the many diverse interests and concerns from the larger community. Pittsburgh has followed one path to meet this challenge, Boston and St. Louis struggle with their alternatives. Regardless of the path followed, it is clear that building a system of excellence in public education is a task not just for educators, but for the entire community.

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